

RICHTHOFEN explains both the outward and the homeward journey of Hsüan-chuang through the western mountains. The pilgrim arrived from India at Kabul and crossed the Hindu-kush in the Khevak Pass, which Wood had made known to us, and further he passed Andarab, Khost, Badakhshan, and Wakhan. He crossed the pass of Karachunkur on the Pamir-kurd and continued down viâ Chieh-p'an-t'ò (Sarikol) to Chieh-sha or Kashgar.<sup>1</sup>

Sir HENRY YULE says of Hsüan-chuang that he »appears to have regarded the Wakhsh branch as the main Fo-ch'ü or Oxus». For after describing the Lake of Pamir, apparently the Sirikul of Wood, he says:

This lake discharges to the westward; for a river issues from it which runs west to the eastern frontier of the kingdom of *Ta-mo-hsi-t'ieh-ti* and then joins the River *Fo-ch'ü*; their waters flow westward and are discharged into the sea.<sup>2</sup>

Yule is of the opinion that Hsüan-chuang on his return journey, when traversing Pamir, apparently followed the route which later on was taken by Montgomerie's MIRZA.<sup>3</sup> Again he says of the pilgrim's return journey:

This appears to have passed up the valley of Wakhan and across the little Pamir to Tash Kurghan, and thence to Kashgar, exactly by the route recently followed by the Mirza.<sup>4</sup>

To get a clear idea of Yule's opinion we have therefore to consider for a moment the itinerary of the Mirza, which in a most excellent way has been described and thoroughly discussed by MAJOR MONTGOMERIE.<sup>5</sup> The Mirza travelled from *Kabul* northwards over the *Hindu-kush* by the ordinary route to *Bamian*, viâ Khulm, Tash-kurgan, through *Badakhshan* viâ Rustak, along the Kokcha river, a tributary to the Oxus, in the valley of the *Upper Oxus* which was reached at Ishkashim, and to the *Punja* fort in Wakhan. So far the Mirza's route could be tested by Wood's, for they were identical and agreed very well:

From *Punja* onwards the Mirza's route diverges from that of Lieutenant WOOD; who took the northern branch of the *Oxus*, whilst the Mirza followed the more southerly branch . . . . . Whichever may have the honour of being the main source of the Oxus, there is no doubt but that the two combined form the Upper Oxus River, and as Wood had explored the northern, it is fortunate that circumstances should have made the Mirza explore the southern. We have now got both, and can account for nearly all the drainage of the Upper Oxus.

In the beginning of January 1869 the Mirza started from *Punja*, and reached, after four days, the watershed of the *Pamir Steppe*, between *Wakhän* and *Eastern Turkistan*. »The rivers were all frozen, and the source was evidently a small frozen lake, called *Pämirkul* or *Barküt Yassin*» which lay about 13300 feet above the sea.<sup>6</sup> »The Mirza thinks that some of its water flows to the west, and some to the east; but, as all the streams were frozen, this cannot be considered as established.» Montgomerie does not believe in such a singular bifurcation, for he knew no lake in the Himalayas with two exits, and regards the phenomenon as uncommon.

<sup>1</sup> China, I, p. 544.

<sup>2</sup> Cathay and the Way thither, Vol. I, London MDCCCXV, p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> Journal Roy. Geogr. Soc. Vol. XLII, 1872, p. 474.

<sup>4</sup> An Essay on the Geography . . . in Wood's Journey to the Source of the River Oxus, London 1872, p. XL.

<sup>5</sup> Report of »The Mirza's» Exploration from Caubul to Kashgar. By Major T. G. MONTGOMERIE, R. E. Journal Roy. Geogr. Soc. Vol. XLI, 1871, p. 132 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> Lord Curzon gives the different heights measured by Trotter, Younghusband, Dunmore, the Boundary Commission, and the Mirza. The average of all, from 13100 to 14230 feet, is 13536, which is very near my 4114 m. or 13494 feet.